



## **Role of Institutional Administrators in School Level Quality Assurance Practice and its Impact on Learners' Academic Achievements in Public Secondary Schools in Kiini East Sub County, Kenya**

\*Kagochi E. Njeri<sup>1</sup>, Kimosop Maurice<sup>1</sup> and Mbugua K. Zachariah<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Educational Planning, Administration and Curriculum Studies  
Karatina University

<sup>2</sup>Department of Educational Psychology and Communication Technology  
Karatina University

\*Corresponding Author's Email Address: [ednahnjeri@gmail.com](mailto:ednahnjeri@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*Quality assurance is widely recognized as a tool for supervising and supporting instruction with capacity to improve curriculum implementation and learner achievement. This paper examined the role of institutional administrators in school level quality assurance practices towards enhancement of curriculum implementation and students' academic achievements in public secondary schools in Kiini East Sub County, Kenya. The study used the Ex-post facto research design and was guided by the Lucio and McNeil theory. The target population comprised of 192 senior masters, 32 deputy principals and 32 principals jointly referred as institutional administrators. A sample size of 190 determined using Yamane Formula was used. The sample comprised of 30 principals, 30 deputy principals and 130 senior masters. The study used stratified random to select institutional administrators and data was collected using questionnaires. Data analysis involved both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics which included Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and regression analysis. The study established that quality assurance practices had a significant influence on students' academic achievement. The quality assurance practices carried out by institutional administrators include ensuring preparation of professional documents, monitoring the adherence to the planning instruments in the course of curriculum implementation and ensuring they were updated appropriately. Additionally, the instructional administrators monitored the effectiveness of instructional processes through regular lesson observation to ensure that the instructional processes were effective. The study recommends that first, TSC should build the capacity of institutional administrators and facilitate the sub county units to enable them visit schools more frequently to monitor the internal quality assurance. Secondly, the TSC should substantively appoint the institutional administrators so that they can gain more confidence and command as they discharge their duties. Lastly, teachers, BOMs and other stakeholders should be sensitized on the impact of internal quality assurance on academic achievements to ensure that they fully embrace it.*

**Keywords:** Quality assurance, Learners' achievements, Lesson observation, Professional documents, Teaching/learning resources

### **INTRODUCTION**

Provision of quality education is a commitment for all governments in the world. In Kenya, all educational taskforces and commissions have all worked towards restructuring the education system in Kenya to make it more relevant to the needs of

the country as well as improving its quality (Republic of Kenya, 1964, 1976, 1988 and 1999). In an attempt to conclusively address the recommendations made by various education reports, the government has over the years worked towards improving the quality and standards of education offered at all levels in keeping with the market demands and trends.

Applied to education provision, quality assurance refers to the attainment of educational standards that are prescribed by government through the bodies tasked with standard setting such as professional bodies, examinational bodies as well as prospective employers (Ominde, 1964). In that sense, quality assurance practices also referred to as appraisals are the processes that are carried out in order to ensure that the process through which instruction is carried out meets the guidelines and that it will result in graduates who meet the prescribed requirements (Basic Education Act, 2013).

Globally, appraisals have been used to make teachers accountable to their employers, students and parents (Middlewood & Cardona, 2001), for instance, in England, a teacher's performance appraisal was used to help teachers develop their career (Bartlet, 2000). In Kenya, the concept of teacher performance appraisal was conceived at independence where Ominde report (1964) proposed a policy suggesting that teachers' performance be evaluated through inspections which called for establishment of a body charged with inspection of schools and teachers with an aim to improve the standards of education (Ominde, 1964). In line with this suggestion, chapter 211, section 18 of the Education Act (1980) quality assurance in education in Kenya was entrusted to the Inspectorate, later renamed Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS) in 2003. The work of the inspectorate was however faced with a myriad of challenges that frustrated its effort to carry out quality assurance in schools such as inadequate financial resources, transportation challenges and lack of necessary skills to appraise teachers (Republic of Kenya, 1999). The system relied on principals to submit confidential reports about performance of teachers without making any reference to the teacher. In 2005, the revised Code of Regulation for Teachers (TSC, 2005) altered the policy to shift from confidential system to the new open system of appraisal. These developments culminated in the new system known as the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) in 2014 (TSC/TPAD/01).

After piloting phase 2013-2016, TPAD appraisal system was rolled out nationally. During the launching, the TSC/TPAD stated that new appraisal system sought to enhance continuous evaluation the performance of teachers and promote professional development of teachers with a view to improving academic outcomes of learners (Philip, 2020). The aim of the appraisal system was thus to provide quality educational services in public schools and provide a balanced, open and effective assessment of teachers. The TPAD tool has seven performance areas against which every teacher is evaluated. A review has so far been made to reduce the performance standards from seven to five. The reports are conducted termly and constitute the annual appraisal report (TSC/TPAD/01).

The TPAD provides an avenue for internal quality assurance at the school level. Teachers are appraised by the Heads of Departments (the title has been changed to senior masters), the senior masters are appraised by the Deputy Principal who is in turn appraised by the principal. The principal also confirmed the appraisal reports from the deputy principal and the senior masters. The principal is in turn appraised by the Sub County Directors and the County Directors acts as the arbitrator and countersigning officer. At the institution level, the principal, deputy principal and the senior masters

constitute the institutional administrators charged with quality assurance at the school level (Kiprop, 2012).

Since the introduction of the TPAD tool and the institutionalization of school level quality assurance, there has been an ongoing debate as to the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance practices discharged by the institutional administrators in translating to actual academic achievement of students. Kieni East is one of the sub counties in Nyeri County. In the last five years, the performance of candidates in KCSE has been on the decline. The records at the County Director of Education in charge of Nyeri County indicate that Kieni East has recorded the lowest KCSE mean score among the other sub counties. One of the possible causes of persistent poor academic performance is lack of adequate internal quality assurance in the schools. The present study sought to establish the role of institutional administrators in school level quality assurance practice and its impact on learners' achievements in secondary schools in Kieni East Sub County, Kenya.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to assess the role of institutional administrators in school level quality assurance practice and its impact on learners' achievements in secondary schools in Kieni East Sub County, Nyeri County, Kenya.

### **Objectives**

The study was guided by the following research objectives:

- a) To explore the effect of institutional administrators' enforcing compliance to curriculum implementation guidelines on the students' academic achievements in public secondary schools in in Kieni East Sub County, Nyeri County, Kenya
- b) To establish the impact of institutional administrators' controlling of instruction preparation on students' academic achievements in public secondary schools in in Kieni East Sub County, Nyeri County, Kenya.
- c) To determine the influence of institutional administrators' monitoring of quality of instruction processes on students' academic achievements in public secondary schools in in Kieni East Sub County, Nyeri County, Kenya.

### **Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>(i): Enforcement of compliance to curriculum implementation guidelines by institutional administrators has no statistically significant effect on students' academic achievements.

H<sub>0</sub>(ii): Controlling of instruction preparation by institutional administrators has no statistically significant impact on students' academic achievements.

H<sub>0</sub>(iii): Monitoring of quality of instruction processes by institutional administrators has no statistically significant influence on students' academic achievements.

## **THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

The study is hinged on the Instructional Supervision Model by Lucio and McNeil (1979). The theory posits that an instructional supervisor carries out a variety of roles. He/she is conceived as a coordinator, a group leader, a consultant and an evaluator. In the domain of supervision, the instructional supervisor carries out instructional development, curriculum development and staff development (Burnham, 1976). As a group leader, the instructional supervisor coordinates the teachers under him/her in selection of materials and identification of the effective delivery method in order to

achieve the instructional objectives. Viewed in that sense, the instructional supervisor directly impacts on the quality of the instructional process at planning and also implementation. In the case with secondary schools, the institutional administrators carry out the role of instructional supervision and appraise teachers under them. They monitor the preparation for teaching, teaching process through lesson observation and they also ensure conformity to the set guidelines to ensure maintenance of teaching standards.

### **Empirical Review**

Quality assurance as a subject has been an item of research in many research studies. Different aspects of quality assurance in provision of educational services have been studied in different locations at different times.

Mwaura (2010) investigated the role played by Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in enhancing provision of educational services in Limuru, Kiambu County, Kenya. The study used descriptive research design and selected a sample through purposive sampling. The study only concentrated on the roles on QUASOs but did not focus on school level quality assurance practices.

Chepkuto (2012) conducted a study investigated how Quality Assurance contribute to enhanced curriculum delivery in primary schools in Baringo District, Kenya. The study used descriptive research design and a sample of 103 teachers selected by simple random method. However, the study only concentrated on external quality assurance practices and failed to focus on internal quality assurance practices which are equally important.

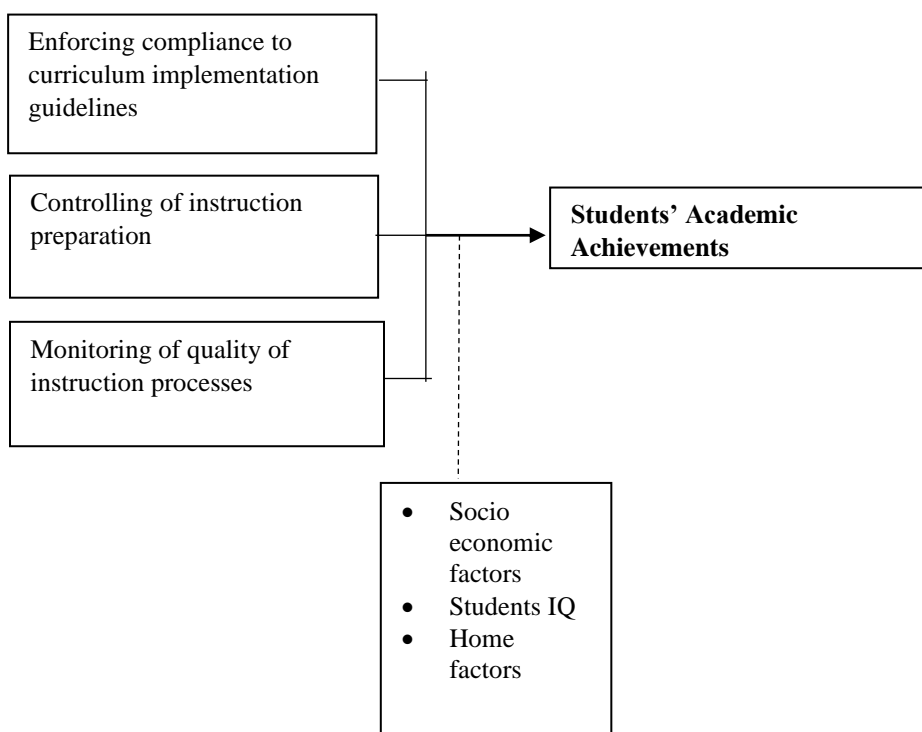
Gichuki (2015) conducted a study to review the teachers' perceptions on how effective the TPAD appraisal system was in public secondary schools in Gilgil and Naivasha Districts, Kenya. The study used descriptive survey design and a sample size of 120 respondents comprising of principals, deputy principals and teachers. The study found out that most of the teachers perceived the appraisal system to be ineffective in assessing the performance of their work due to inadequate appraisal skills among the school-based appraisers. The study therefore recommended that; TSC needs to organize for in-service training for institutional administrators to equip them with requisite skills and knowledge and hence improve their performance. However, unlike in the present study, the study did not assess the effect of the appraisal system on students' achievements.

Ngeno et al. (2017) in a research paper sought to establish how the teacher performance appraisal related to the performance of students in high schools in Bomet County, Kenya. The study used a sample of 20% of all the secondary schools which were selected by stratified random sampling technique. Among other findings, the study established that the appraisal tool had no effect on how the students performed in academics in the county. The study recommended that the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) reviews and refines the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool to be enable it to reflect more on the performance of students and teachers. This present study focused on the performance of teachers and not that of learners. The present study aimed at establishing the effect of internal quality assurance on students' academic achievements.

### **Conceptualization and Conceptual Framework**

Conceptual framework displays the defined relationship amongst variables tested in the study. The independent variables (IV) are institutional administrators' enforcing

compliance to curriculum implementation guidelines, institutional administrators' controlling of instruction preparation and institutional administrators' monitoring of quality of instruction processes while the dependent variable (DV) is students' academic achievements. Further, the DV is presumed to be modelled by learners IQ, socio economic factors and school factors.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted *ex post facto* research design since it aimed at testing the hypothesis by analyzing the relationships between variables. The target population comprised of all the senior masters, deputy principals and principals who are jointly referred to as institutional administrators. According to the records at the County Director of Education, Kieni East has 32 principals, 32 deputy principals and 192 senior masters. The study used stratified random sampling to select institutional administrators at school level in order to obtain a representative sample. A sample size for each of the strata was determined using Yamane Formula. The sample comprised of 30 principals, 30 deputy principals and 130 senior masters. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The questionnaires were administered to the institutional administrators. The data gathered was first coded, categorized and then analyzed using SPSS (version 23). The methods of data analysis used included both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics such as the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multi linear regression to test the research hypothesis. To enhance clarity, the results are presented in tables and narrations. The rest of the data gathered through interview was analyzed using thematic analysis.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

### **Institutional Administrators' Quality Assurance in Curriculum Implementation**

The first objective of the study was to assess the effect of institutional administrators' enforcing compliance to curriculum implementation guidelines on the students' academic achievements. In order to achieve this objective, the institutional administrators were asked to indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with a set of six statements about the quality assurance practices they carry out to ensure that the teachers comply with prudent curriculum implementation guidelines. The level of agreement or otherwise was measured on 5-point Likert scale 5= strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3= neutral, 2= Disagree, 1= strongly disagree. The frequency of the responses obtained for each statement was used to compute and the mean which was used to rate the extent of agreement or disagreement. Interpretation of the range of the means obtained for each statement was done as follows: up to 1.5 implied strongly disagree; 1.6-2.0 implied disagree; 2.1-2.5 implied agree; 2.6-3.0: implied strongly agree and 3.1 - 5.0: implied very strongly agree (Sullivan & Artino Jr, 2013). The mean ranges adopted were based on the trends observed in the responses. In addition, standard deviation was used to determine the unanimity of the response. A lower value of standard deviation (<1.0) indicated high unanimity of response.

**Table 1: Quality Assurance in Curriculum Implementation**

SN.	Construct	N	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Std. Deviation
A1	Learning programmes/Time tabling is learner centered	128	2.77	1.289
A2	Syllabus coverage is closely monitored	128	2.68	0.985
A3	Lesson attendance is closely monitored and controlled	128	2.79	1.263
A4	Teachers are guided through term goal/target setting	128	2.78	1.298
A5	Punctuality in class attendance is closely monitored	128	2.58	1.134
A6	Evaluation standards are closely monitored and controlled	128	2.87	1.153

According to the results presented in Table 1, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that learner centered planned learning programmes/Time tabling, monitoring of syllabus coverage, closely monitoring and controlling lesson attendance, guiding teachers through target/ goal setting and closely monitoring evaluation standards ( $\bar{x} > 2.6$ ) enhance the academic achievements of students according to the study by Kapur (2018). On the other hand, a smaller proportion of respondents perceived monitoring punctuality in class attendance ( $\bar{x} = 2.58$ ) to result in better academic achievements.

### **Monitoring Instruction Preparedness of Teachers**

The second objective of the study was to explore the effect of monitoring instruction preparedness of teachers on the students' academic achievements. In order to achieve this objective, the institutional administrators were provided with six items and asked to indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with a set of six statements pertaining to the quality assurance practices carried out to ensure that the teachers prepared and adhered to professional documents such as schemes of work, lesson plans, lesson notes, attendance registers and progress records.

**Table 2: Effectiveness of monitoring instruction preparedness of teachers**

SN	Construct	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
B1	Administration ensures timely preparation of teacher professional documents	128	2.38	1.087
B2	Administration ensures all professional documents are approved and commissioned before use	128	2.73	1.153
B3	Administration conducts adherence checks on the professional documents frequently	128	2.64	1.099
B4	Administration frequently checks learners work books and academic progress	128	3.03	1.094
B5	Administration checks to ensure teachers regularly updates professional documents	128	2.54	1.170
B6	Learners' academic achievements are monitored closely for necessary remedial action	128	2.86	1.078

The results obtained indicated that majority of the respondents very strongly agreed ( $\bar{x} = 3.03$ ) that the frequent checks of learners work books and academic progress by the institutional administrators enhanced academic achievement of students through ensuring teachers adequately prepared for their lessons which would translate to better academic performance. Secondly, most of the respondents strongly agreed ( $\bar{x} = 2.73, 2.64$  and  $2.86$ ) with the statements that ensuring timely preparation, approval and commissioning of professional documents before use and conducting adherence checks on the professional documents frequently as well as monitoring closely the academic progress of students for necessary remedial action enhanced students' academic achievements by ensuring adequate planning by the teacher and resulting effectiveness in curriculum implementation among the students. On the other hand, a small proportion of respondents agreed with the statements that ensuring timely preparation of teacher professional documents and regular checks to ensure teachers update the professional documents influences students' academic achievements by thorough planning of instruction.

### Effectiveness of Monitoring of Quality of Instruction

The third objective of the study was to explore the effect of monitoring instruction of teachers through lesson observation on the students' academic achievements. In order to achieve this objective, the institutional administrators were asked to indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with a set of six statements about the quality assurance practices regarding lesson observation.

**Table 3: Monitoring of Quality of Instruction**

SN	Construct	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
C1	Lesson observations are conducted frequently for all teachers	128	3.05	1.136
C2	Physical lesson observation on entire lesson is always carried out	128	2.95	1.285
C3	Pre-lesson observation meetings are always held between the teachers and the lesson observers	128	2.20	0.593
C4	Pedagogy used by the teacher during lesson delivery is checked for suitability	128	2.88	1.087
C5	Teaching aids/materials used by the teacher are evaluated for effectiveness	128	3.11	1.341
C6	Post lesson observation review and progress meetings are always held	128	2.83	0.843

The findings indicated that majority of the respondents very strongly agreed with the statement that frequent lesson observations and evaluation of teaching aids/ resources ( $\bar{x} > 3.0$ ) influences the academic achievements of students. Secondly, a big proportion of the respondents strongly agreed ( $\bar{x} = 2.95, 2.88 \text{ \& } 2.83$ ) that physical lesson observation on entire lesson, checking the suitability of the pedagogy used by the teacher during lesson delivery and carrying out post lesson observation review and progress meetings had an impact on the academic achievements of students. Finally, a small proportion of the respondents ( $\bar{x} = 2.20$ ) agreed with the statement that holding of pre-lesson observation meetings with the teachers being observed has an impact on the academic achievements of students.

### Internal Quality Assurance Practices and Academic Achievement

The study further sought to establish the correlation between the quality assurance practices carried out by institutional administrators and student's academic achievement. Pearson Correlation Product Moment was used. the level of significance was set at .05 (two tail test). Table 4 displays the results.

**Table 4: Correlation between internal quality assurance practices and academic performance**

Administrative Practice			KCSE Mean Score
Effectiveness of Quality Assurance in Curriculum Implementation	Pearson	Correlation	.908**
	Sig.		.000
	(2-tailed)		128
	N		
Effectiveness of Quality Assurance in Level of Teacher Instructional Preparation	Pearson	Correlation	.906**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N		128
Effectiveness of Quality Assurance in Monitoring Instructional Process	Pearson	Correlation	.946**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N		128

The results obtained indicated that all the practices tested in the study were highly positively correlated to academic achievements of students as indicated by the high r-values ( $r \geq 0.7$ ). all the correlations were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). the findings imply that the student's academic achievement is highly influenced by the internal quality assurance practices carried out by institutional administrators.

### Comparative Impact of Internal Quality Assurance Practices and Academic Achievement

In order to quantify the relative impacts different quality assurance practices, have on academic achievement of students. The researcher carried out multi linear regression analysis. Tables 5, 6 and 7 display the results obtained.

**Table 5: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.954 <sup>a</sup>	.910	.908	.356064	1.443

The output on Table 5 indicates that the three predictor variables tested predicted 91% of the variability in the dependent variable (R square=.910). The findings therefore indicate that the monitoring instructional process through lesson observation, ensuring adequate instructional preparation and ensuring compliance to prudent curriculum implementation by institutional administrators have a large impact

on students' academic achievements.

**Table 6: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	159.154	3	53.051	418.447	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	15.721	124	.127		
	Total	174.875	127			

The output displayed on Table 6 indicate that the impact of the internal quality assurance practices carried out by institutional administrators that were tested on academic achievements is statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

**Table 7: Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.035	.091		-.389	.698
	Curriculum implementation	.148	.079	.145	1.876	.033
	Level of teacher Instructional preparation	.212	.075	.206	2.847	.005
	Monitoring instructional processes	.529	.065	.626	8.175	.000

The results obtained indicated that the three predictor variables jointly have a statistically significant influence on the academic achievements of students ( $p < .05$ ). The model predicting academic achievement of students may thus be formulated as follows:

$$Y = -0.035 + 0.145X_1 + 0.206X_2 + 0.626X_3 + \epsilon$$

where; Y= Academic achievements of students.

$X_1$ =Internal quality assurance to ensure compliance to curriculum implementation guidelines.

$X_2$ =Internal quality assurance to ensure teacher instructional preparedness.

$X_3$ =Internal quality assurance involving monitoring of the instructional process such as lesson observation.

$\epsilon$ = stochastic error term.

### Hypothesis testing

The first hypothesis of the study was stated as; institutional administrators' enforcing compliance to curriculum implementation guidelines has no statistically significant effect on students' academic achievements. The nature and strength of the relationship between the variables was determined by regression equation;  $Y = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$ , where Y was students' academic performance,  $X_1$  was the institutional administrators' enforcing compliance to curriculum implementation guidelines and  $\beta_1$  was the coefficient. The analysis established that institutional administrators' enforcing compliance to curriculum implementation guidelines are predictors of students' academic performance (Beta = .145,  $t = 1.876$ ,  $p = .033 < .05$ ) effectively rejecting the hypothesis as stated. Thus, the findings suggest that institutional administrators' enforcing the compliance to curriculum implementation guidelines has a significant impact on the academic performance of students in Kieni East Sub-County, Kenya.

The second hypothesis of the study was stated as; institutional administrators' controlling of instruction preparation has no statistically significant impact on students' academic achievements in secondary schools in Kieni East Sub-County, Kenya. The relationship was determined by regression equation;  $Y = \alpha_2 + \beta_2 X_2 + e$ , where Y was students' academic performance,  $X_2$  was the institutional administrators' controlling of instruction preparation and  $\beta_2$  was the coefficient. The analysis established that institutional administrators' controlling of instruction preparation significantly predict students' academic performance (Beta = .206,  $t=2.847$ ,  $p=.005<.05$ ) thus effectively rejecting the hypothesis as stated, implying that institutional administrators' controlling of instruction preparation has a significant influence on the academic performance of students in Kieni East Sub-County, Kenya.

The third hypothesis of the study was stated as; institutional administrators' monitoring of quality of instruction processes has no statistically significant impact on students' academic achievements in secondary schools in Kieni East Sub County, Kenya. The relationship was determined by regression equation;  $Y = \alpha_3 + \beta_3 X_3 + e$ , where Y was students' academic performance,  $X_3$  was the institutional administrators' monitoring of quality of instruction processes and  $\beta_3$  was the coefficient. The analysis established that institutional administrators' monitoring of quality of instruction processes significantly predict students' academic performance (Beta = .626,  $t=8.175$ ,  $p=.000<.05$ ) thus rejecting the hypothesis as stated. Therefore, the findings indicate that institutional administrators' monitoring of quality of instruction processes has a significant influence on the academic performance of students in Kieni East Sub County, Kenya.

## DISCUSSION

The study sought to establish the effect of internal quality assurance practices carried out by institutional administrators on academic achievements of students in secondary school in Kieni East Sub County. Generally, the results obtained indicated that all the internal quality assurance practices tested in this study were highly positively correlated to academic achievements of students. The findings imply that the students' academic achievements are highly influenced by the internal quality assurance practices carried out by institutional administrators. Further, the study tested effect of three aspects of internal quality assurance independently on the academic achievements of students through three specific objectives. Similar findings were reported by a study carried out by Heaven and Bourne (2016) and Usman (2015) which found strong positive correlation between instructional supervision and academic performance of students.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that quality assurance practices carried out by institutional administrators have a significant influence on students' academic achievements. The quality assurance practices include ensuring timely preparation of professional documents such as lesson plans, schemes of work, lesson notes, progress records and attendance registers, monitoring the adherence to the planning instruments in the course of curriculum implementation and ensuring they are updated appropriately. In addition, the instructional administrators monitor the effectiveness of instructional processes through regular lesson observation to ensure that the pedagogy used and teaching materials used are effective enough.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The TSC should build the capacity of institutional administrators through continuous training to make them more effective in carrying out quality assurance practices.
- ii. The TSC should appoint institutional administrators substantively so that they can gain more confidence and command more authority as they discharge their quality assurance duties.
- iii. The teachers and other stakeholders should be sensitized on the impact of internal quality assurance on academic achievements to enable them embrace it and overcome resistance to change.
- iv. The TSC should facilitate the sub-county units adequately to be able to visit schools more frequently to monitor the progress of internal quality assurance.

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